

# Listen

## A Seeker's Resource for Spiritual Direction

O C T O B E R 2 0 1 2

V O L 6 : I S S U E 4

### BECOME AVAILABLE

My smartphone chimed, indicating a new text message. I read four words, "How was your day?" Pausing, the simple sentence evoked a multitude of emotions, sensations, and thoughts. I stood still, surprised. Primary was the realization that it has been a very long time since I'd been the recipient of this gentle question, a genuine invitation to reflect and share, four simple words conveying interest and care.

Our conversations and communication with each other are often functional, relaying data and details: I'll meet you at ..., When is ...?, I need ..., How about ...?, Where is ...?, and so forth. The text, *How was your day?* queried me, posed a reflective question, evoked my response, and began a mutual conversation and exchange that grew intimacy and friendship. When we communicate and interact with each other, a flow of energy and presence brings forth expansion or contraction.

I had a choice in my response to that text message—I could share about the productivity or pleasures of the day, or my concerns and fatigue, or a dozen other details. My desire was to be utterly available to my best self, and to the person asking the question. To become available means to be able to avail ourselves on behalf of someone, or something. It is a choice that involves intention, willpower, and decision. Sometimes to be available involves risk and takes courage. Being available



Cape Gannet — *Morus capensis*

generates connection and ultimately involves both giving and receiving.

In the beginning of *Aleph*, a provocative new novel by author Paulo Coelho, the main character prepares to make a journey, and visits a chapel. Coelho writes, "There I asked Our Lady to guide me with her love and help me identify the signs that will lead me back to myself. I know that I am in all the people surrounding me, and that they are in me. Together we write the Book of Life, our every encounter determined by fate and our hands joined in the belief that we can make a difference in this world. Everyone contributes a word, a sentence, an image, but in the end it all makes sense: the happiness of one becomes the joy of all" (21).

When we pause, on behalf of our own soul stirrings, on behalf of another person, or when stirred by empathy,

compassion, or injustice, we evoke the inner spaciousness to become available. To be available allows healing, wholeness, connection, and joy to birth in the cosmos. I imagine a world where every day we make the time to pause and ask, *How was your day?* or *How are you?* to someone dear to us, or to a complete stranger. And then show up, and listen.

A spiritual companion might ask these kinds of questions during spiritual direction, opening a pathway of conversation, and allowing a listening presence to flow within and between both the listener and the speaker. When asked with sincerity, these genuine, evocative questions heal, and lead each of us to our authentic self, mystery, and ultimately write the book of our life. 🌿

—Pegge Erkeneff

#### SEEDS OF INTEREST:

- 🌱 Contemplative Reflection: *Breathe*
- 🌱 Book Review: *Writing—The Sacred Art: Beyond the Page to Spiritual Practice*
- 🌱 Poem: *Out of the Depths*
- 🌱 Global Resources
- 🌱 Poem: *A Way of Seeing*
- 🌱 Ask Owl

# CONTEMPLATIVE REFLECTION

## BREATHE

Pause, where ever you are.

Breathe until you feel your chest and belly expand.

Let go. Do it again.

Again

Wiggle your toes. Imagine your breath moving in your body, like a pulse beat.

Wiggle your fingertips

Be still.

Imagine your breath moving up from your fingertips...

Up your arms...

tickling your scalp and ears, then brushing down your neck, off your shoulders.

Continue to breathe. Quietly and slowly speak these words aloud, allowing your attention to focus and pause when you speak each word:

Fingertips

Scalp

Eyes

Mouth

Chin

Neck

Shoulders

Heart

Belly

Hips

Thighs

Knees

Calves

Ankles

Toes

Soles of feet

Breathe, be still for several moments or minutes.

Wiggle and shake your body vigorously. Smile. ☺



### “A Sabbatical Journey in the Southwest”

Spring: May 17 - July 1, 2013

Fall: September 13 - October 28, 2013

Spring: May 16 - June 30, 2014

Fall: September 12 - October 27, 2014

A 6-week holistic program, for men and women religious and priests, that offers the time, the space, and the guidance to step back from one's ordinary *chronos* activities into the *kairos* moment of the Sabbath, in a peaceful oasis set in the desert of the Southwest. Spiritual direction, daily Eucharist, input sessions and small group sharing, an 8-day retreat, outings, and other activities are part of the program.

For more information or to register, please contact:

Canossian Spirituality Center,

5625 Isleta Blvd. SW,

Albuquerque, NM 87105

Phone: (505) 452-9402 / Fax: (505) 877-2571

Email: spiritualityctr@yahoo.com

www.canossianspiritualitycenter.org

### St. Ignatius Jesuit Retreat House

251 Searingtown Rd, Manhasset, NY 11030

www.inisfada.net



#### Directed Retreats

November 16-18; November 30-December 6

January 13-18; May 3-8

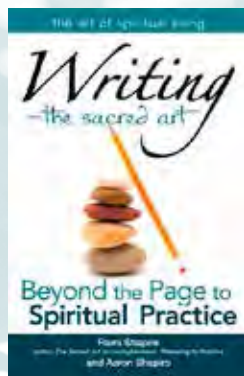
#### Supervision for Spiritual Directors

*One-on-one ongoing supervision for those in the Ministry of Spiritual Direction.*

**For details contact Sr. Thomas More, RGS  
516-621-8300 x 25, or T More@inisfada.net**



# BOOK REVIEW



**Writing—The Sacred Art: Beyond the Page to Spiritual Practice**

by Rami Shapiro and Aaron Shapiro

Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2012  
176 pages, CAD\$14.40, GBP£10.86, USD\$16.99

Review by Carol A. Fournier

*Writing—The Sacred Art: Beyond the Page to Spiritual Practice* by spiritual teacher Rami Shapiro and writing coach Aaron Shapiro offers a textured path to deeper self-awareness informed by writing as a spiritual practice.

If you feel called to engage the five worlds of body, heart, mind, soul, and spirit through a holistic experience of writing as a spiritual practice the authors will challenge, entice and encourage you to dance with the fluid nature of life. An invitation into the essential nature of the human experience can assist in reclaiming the integrative path that all faith traditions point towards. The Shapiro's—father and son—encourage writers to embrace the shadow as a source of insight and spiritual inspiration. Redeeming the shadow is a sacred work that emerges through the art of writing, and transforms the writer while inviting reconciliation of hidden places through the creative process.

The authors share from the wisdom that comes from spirituality well lived, and informed by the practicality

of living in the daily-ness of understanding the true or authentic Self and adaptive self, neighbors and enemies, and God. The book offers a weaving of wisdom from Judaism, Christianity, and Sufism (mystical Islam) informed by perspectives in contemporary philosophy and theology as it broadly relates to spirituality, and particularly to the human experience.

Rami Shapiro writes, “We both imagine that in engaging with the craft of writing, we are seeking some kind of encounter: with the human, with the divine, with life, with art, with the other. It doesn’t really matter. What matters is that, for us, these encounters occur in words, in the opportunities afforded by ink and paper. The writing prompts in this book are just that: opportunities” (xv).

Nearly fifty writing exercises are included. An exercise in the chapter “Writing to Open the Mind” encourages personal consideration about “Who’s In? Who’s Out?”. The authors suggest that the writer consider who is in and who is out in terms of religion, family, and self, then honestly challenge the established norms of the journey. For example, they write, “Starting with the “Religion” section, think in terms of who’s in: who are the chosen, the saved, the believers, and the righteous and so on... and “Who’s Out”...Who are the unchosen? Who are the unsaved?” Once a list is compiled the authors propose further writing about the rationale for the choices that have been made, encouraging consideration of the reality that “who goes where and why depends on a story you accept as true” (68-69).

As a trainer of interfaith spiritual directors and counselors, *Writing—The Sacred Art: Beyond the Page to Spiritual Practice* is a means of encouraging and challenging self-awareness. The thoughtfully constructed resources and exercises could contribute to the engagement of spirituality within psychotherapy as a form of bibliotherapy as well as a fine addition in the formation of ministers, chaplains, spiritual guides, and theologians.

—Carol A. Fournier, MS, MA, NCC, is director and founder of the Silver Dove Institute in Burlington, Vermont, USA. She trains interfaith spiritual directors and counselors internationally. A retreat director and author, she lives in Vermont, USA. Her e-mail is [info@silverdoveinstitute.org](mailto:info@silverdoveinstitute.org).

Listen

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W W W . S D I W O R L D . O R G

*Listen* is an outreach publication of Spiritual Directors International. When you visit the SDI website at [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org), you can learn about retreats, programs, conferences, and other educational events related to spiritual companionship. You can read descriptions of the spiritual direction relationship from a variety of spiritual traditions,

and discover excellent questions to ask yourself and any potential spiritual directors you choose to interview. To locate a spiritual director or guide, go online to *Seek and Find Guide: A Worldwide Resource of Available Spiritual Directors*. More than 5,000 spiritual directors are listed by geographical location at [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org).





# Out of the Depths

Out of the depths I cried to you

And you pained me by your answer

Deeper... deeper... deeper still

Deeper I went

Into the silence

Into the cavernous spaces

Into the darkness

And the lonely places

A place of no life –

A place of agonised pain –

Yet you said just trust –

Just stay, just try

Don't seek to run away

Restless, I struggled to stay,

Pained, I ran away,

You drew me back,

I wriggled as caught in a trap

And out of those depths

The tears began to flow

Anger fear dread and shame

Rose subsided and passed away

Memories again relived, released

And self renewed

And through those darkened places

Deeper, deeper still into the silence

Until that place of emptiness

Of dread lonely death and darkness

Becomes a vast pool

My rock, my life, my every foundation

Still pool of life, *ruah* emerges.

– Bridget

## GLOBAL RESOURCES : Supporting Your Spiritual Journey

### Spiritual Guidance Training Program

A two-year, ecumenical weekend residency program, beginning in January 2013.

Contact Rita Lui, OP

Siena Retreat Center, Racine, WI

[www.SienaRetreatCenter.org](http://www.SienaRetreatCenter.org)

### Multi-Faith Spiritual Companionship

Advanced Course for Spiritual Directors

Prepares you to companion all

in our multi-faith spiritual world.

February 11-15, 2013, Berkeley, CA

[www.chaplaincyinstitute.org](http://www.chaplaincyinstitute.org)

### November 13, 2012

#### "How to Seek and Find a Spiritual Director"

FREE one hour SDI teleconference

12:00 EDT; 4:00 GMT/UTC

Details and RSVP at [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org)

### February 22 – 25, 2013

#### Mission Santa Barbara, CA, USA

Monastery Risen Christ Reunion Retreat

School graduates & guests invited to

"Prayer, Dreams & Healing Retreat"

207-491-7524; [joyologist@gwi.net](mailto:joyologist@gwi.net)

### April 11 – 14, 2013

#### St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Cultivating Compassion on the River

Spiritual Directors International series

of educational events including a

conference with keynote Joyce Rupp, OSM,

spiritual director John Pollard, and

dozens of workshops, institutes, pilgrimage,

and contemplative retreat to help you

cultivate compassion in yourself and your

communities.

Registration begins September 2012.

[www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org)

### Join more than 6,000 people in a global

contemplative, multi-faith learning

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SDI has been committed to compassionate

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spiritual companionship is invited to

become a member of Spiritual Directors

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the educational needs of people who offer

spiritual companionship.

[www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org)

● Connect on Facebook: *Spiritual Directors International for spiritual care.*

● Order a FREE subscription to *Listen: A Seeker's Resource for Spiritual Direction.*  
Go to: [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org)

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Spiritual direction explores a deeper relationship with the spiritual aspect of being human. Simply put, spiritual direction is helping people tell their sacred stories every day. Descriptions of a spiritual guidance relationship include *Anam Cara*, spiritual accompaniment,

spiritual companionship, spiritual direction, spiritual guidance, spiritual mentoring, sacred friendship, and soul friendship. How would you describe a relationship with another person—or group—that listens deeply to you, and receives *your* sacred life story?

# *The Missing Link!*

## **Rediscovering the Lost Body-Connection Within Christian Spirituality**

**The Missing Link for  
Experiencing Yourself in the  
Body of the Whole Christ is a  
Changing Relationship to  
Your Own Body**

**Edwin M. McMahon, Ph.D.  
Peter A. Campbell, Ph.D.**

*... For Small Group Sharing  
and for Self or Individual  
Companioning*

**C**HRISTIANITY IS A 2000 YEAR old faith rediscovering itself in the Twenty-First century via learning how to go deeper into the Body of the Whole Christ by “abiding in Love” within our own body. St. John mapped out this path for us when he wrote: “God is Love, and a person who abides in Love lives in God, and God in that person.” (1 Jn 4:14)

This workbook is designed to be used by spiritual directors, among others, in both small group settings as well as when companioning another person. It can help people to change the way they relate to difficult feelings that are too often viewed as enemies blocking our experience of “Finding God in all things.”

The workbook guides each reader through

a series of body-learnings the authors have discovered from fifty years of research into a healthy inner body-process called *BioSpiritual Focusing*. They learned that we cannot grow into loving as God loves, as St. John challenges us to live, unless we first develop the habit of noticing and caring for our own bodies bearing the burden of painful feelings.

**W**E NOW KNOW THAT the missing link for experiencing yourself “in Christ” is a changing relationship in how you treat your own body and feelings. This especially refers to the burden of carrying difficult feelings which deserve the same respectful presence and listening-to that Jesus encouraged us to have for our neighbors: “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Mt 5:44) Our difficult feelings routinely attempt to tell us something very important *about ourselves!* They cry out to be heard.

The workbook supports your growth in this grace-filled inner process through six new body-learnings and helpful exercises.

**You will find more information at:**

**<http://www.biospiritual.org>**

The above website offers a further resource for small groups and individuals seeking a more embodied experience of spirituality, better integrated with their search for human wellness and personal wholeness.

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Workbook also available from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



## A Way of Seeing

If you are who I think you are  
I can be angry and you will see  
the hurt from which it comes.  
You will feel my rage  
and know that I believe in you.

If you are who I think you are  
you will see disappointment  
as grief for the loss  
of the love I never knew I had.  
You will see my tears as sorrow  
watering robust seeds.

If you are who I think you are  
I can envy you and you will see  
a poorly staked sapling  
struggling to find light  
amongst wise old trees.

If you are who I think you are,  
you will see my greed  
as poverty, as desire for more  
of what satisfies a part of me  
I haven't come to know.

If you are who I think you are  
You will see my obsession  
as love tipped awry.

If you are who I think you are  
You will love my limitedness.  
You will be patient  
with my ongoing stretch  
towards grace.

If I am who God says I am  
I will see all these things in you  
and feel grateful  
for who I know you are.

-- Marlene Marburg [Victoria, Australia]



## Dreams

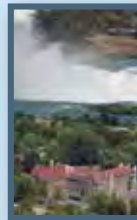
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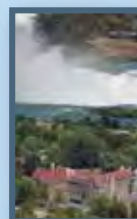
## A Retreat with Henri Nouwen

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2012**

*Father Henri Nouwen was the formative and influential spiritual writer of his time. His wisdom was born of the struggles and joys of life. Explore the insights of this man of hope, who saw at the heart of his personal darkness the opening to Divine Love.*

**Dr. Michael W. Higgins**

The Official Biographer of Henri Nouwen



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# ASK OWL



**Q**uestion: How often do people meet with a spiritual guide? And, sometimes when I meet with my spiritual guide a long silence erupts, and I become uncomfortable. What should I

do if this happens again?

**H**oot Hoot: Thank you for your excellent and common questions. First of all, generally speaking people meet with a spiritual guide once every four to six weeks. If a person is making a guided retreat, meeting times might be more frequent. Some spiritual directors and directees mutually schedule the next date at the conclusion of a meeting time. Others conclude, depart, and then later a person contacts the spiritual director when he or she is ready for another time to meet for spiritual direction. Please talk with your spiritual director to determine the best fit for you. Know that the amount of time between meetings is flexible and may

shift during different times of your life, depending on life circumstances.

Your questions about silence are good ones. Often we do not appreciate the gift of silence. We chatter, speak quickly, internally ponder what to do next, or fidget. In spiritual direction silence can be beneficial. Silence allows us to listen to what we may be afraid to speak, or to our story unfolding with new revelation. Silence allows us to digest reality. Silence may be an opportunity to become available to the present moment of here and now, imbued with love, healing, and mystery.

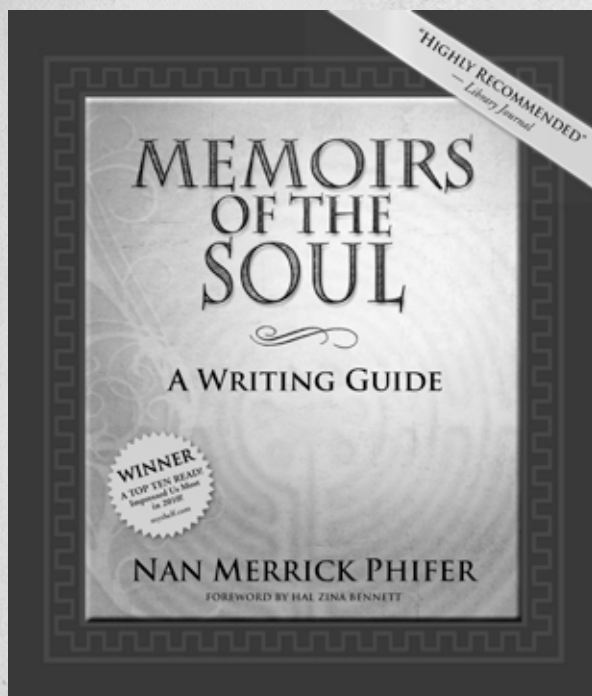
The next time you experience an awkward silence, consider naming it aloud to your spiritual director. Or, try to breathe deeply with peace, knowing the one who occupies the third chair may be inviting you and your guide to understanding, reverence, or wise action. Be still, and listen with an open heart.

—If you have a question for Owl, please e-mail [Listen@sdiworld.org](mailto:Listen@sdiworld.org).



Nan Phifer's

## Memoirs of the Soul



“A how-to guide on writing that is also an escort for the great voyage of the soul. It reminds me of the examen process of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. Simple, profound, and a pathway to living a life of wholeness and balance.”

—Nancy Gallagher, Tune In!

“Sensitive, articulate, direct and clear. Her years of teaching experience are evident in the effortless way she is able to draw out people's stories without intimidation or the usual fears of self-exposure.”

—Joyce Cameron, Spiritual Directors' Network of Oregon.

“Phifer offers suggestions on how this book can be used by one person, partners in writing, or in a group workshop setting.”

—*Spiritual Woman Newsletter*

[www.memoirsofthesoul.com](http://www.memoirsofthesoul.com)  
Available at major online bookstores.





spiritual directors international

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"Tending the holy around the world and across traditions ...

Al servicio de lo sacro alrededor del mundo y a través de las tradiciones ..."

—Translated by Marta Rios and Xavier Ortiz Monasterio

## NINE GATES MYSTERY SCHOOL



Fall 2012 School

Part 1: 10/26 - 11/4, 2012

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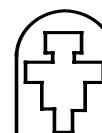
Part 2: 3/29 - 4/7, 2013

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